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**Voices from the Margin: Non-Governmental Organization
Participation in the Tropical Forestry Action Plan**

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1

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| I. Introduction: The TFAP and NGOs | 1 |
| II. Rationale for NGO Participation | 3 |
| III. TFAP's Call for NGO Participation..... | 5 |
| IV. NGO Participation as Outlined in FAO Guidelines: Prospects and Limitations | 7 |
| V. Analysis of NGO Participation in TFAP Implementation | 11 |
| VI. Effective NGO Participation: Gaining Ground or Standing Still? | 15 |
| VII. Conclusions | 21 |
| VIII. Recommendations for Improving NGO Participation in the TFAP..... | 21 |
| Notes | 27 |
| Appendix A. Questionnaire for NGO Status Report..... | 29 |
| Appendix B. Background to Information Collection and Analysis | 31 |
| Appendix C. Proposal for a New Management Structure for the TFAP | 33 |
| Appendix D. Recommendations for Guidelines for NGO Participation in the Implementation of a National TFAP | 37 |
| Bibliography | 39 |

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C.C.

“Success (for the Tropical Forestry Action Plan) will...depend on the support and involvement of small farmers and village communities, local and national NGOs....” p. 29, “Tropical Forestry Action Plan,” FAO, 1987.

I.

Introduction: The TFAP and NGOs

Tropical deforestation was addressed in a series of reports and proposals in 1985 released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Resources Institute (WRI). The WRI report by an international task force was entitled *Tropical Forests: A Call For Action*.¹ Simultaneously, FAO released *Tropical Forestry Action Plan*.² Both efforts were brought under one broad framework for action to confront tropical deforestation. In June 1987, a short brochure summarized the two reports into one brief document, *Tropical Forestry Action Plan*, published by FAO in cooperation with the World Resources Institute, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme.³

Tropical deforestation must be slowed, these documents stress, because of its adverse effects on human welfare. Indeed, to make the action program a reality, it is essential to "involve the millions of people who live within and beside the forests and depend upon them to satisfy their basic

needs."⁴ The TFAP documents identify nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), particularly at the grassroots level, as playing an important role helping to "plan and carry out the solutions best suited to the particular needs of the country or region."⁵

The quality and extent of NGO participation in the national TFAP process are examined in this paper. This paper is meant to inform donor and government agencies as well as NGOs of the TFAP record in involving NGOs in the planning process. The paper will briefly examine the mechanisms proposed for their participation in the TFAP; evaluate the adequacy of these procedures; analyze indicators of actual NGO participation; and determine (to the extent information permits) if NGO participation has improved the representation of the people who have most at stake in the use of forest resources in the national policy-making process, or has otherwise contributed to the planning process.

5 /

II.

Rationale for NGO Participation

Local, national and international NGOs can contribute in many ways to the sustainable development of forest resources. The capabilities of NGOs vary as much as their diversity, but their activities include:

Community mobilization: Thousands of local organizations and service NGOs are engaged in forestry-related work as part of their efforts to mobilize rural peoples towards self-reliance. Much of this work seek to promote community-based, participatory forestry programs that benefit economically and socially disadvantaged groups.⁶

Extension of government and aid agency programs: NGOs often work with governments and aid agencies on collaborative programs. NGOs, with their interest in mobilizing people, carry out activities in which national forest departments are often less experienced. NGOs may work with government and aid agencies by distributing food aid, augmenting extension efforts; and providing materials and resources for projects.⁷

Information gathering and applied research: NGOs may have information about local needs and conditions, gained through their own experience, applied research, and evaluation.⁸

Innovation: NGOs often have the ability to experiment with novel initiatives for complex problems. NGOs can use their small size, administrative flexibility, and relative freedom

from political constraints to experiment with solutions tailored to local needs.⁹

Integrated approaches: NGOs are typically less hampered by the sectoral focus of specialized government agencies which tend to deal with individual issues such as water supply, forestry, crop production, or education. NGOs are freer to design integrated programs to address the full range of local community needs.

Policy advocacy: Many NGOs monitor and propose alternatives to the environmental and social impacts of government and aid agency programs and policies, particularly policies that hurt the rural poor.¹⁰

Such NGO activities as these make NGO participation

in the TFAP planning process important for a number of reasons. NGO participation is not an end in itself, but it is a vehicle by which the planning process can encompass citizens' participation and represent popular concerns.

- NGOs can help bring a greater diversity of approaches and community-level insights to complex problems. A plurality of perspectives helps planners and the public examine problems, define issues and propose solutions more comprehensively.

VOICES FROM THE MARGIN

- NGOs that represent their constituents *make the planning process more democratic* and can draw attention to the rights and needs of individuals and groups on the margins of society.
- NGOs fill a vital need for independent institutions and constituency-based groups in a governmental process. Because government is often limited in its ability to represent the interests of all concerned parties, opening up the process to NGOs can *help make government responsive and accountable* to groups that lack influence in

decision-making, such as the rural poor, indigenous peoples and the disenfranchised relative to such well-connected groups as large commercial interests.

However, not all NGOs can fully or adequately represent these concerns or demonstrate carefully researched independent opinion. Criteria for participation by institutions (both governmental and non-governmental) are needed to ensure their relevance. NGOs need to be responsible and credible institutions to contribute effectively to the planning process.

III.

TFAP's Call for NGO Participation

With this rationale in mind, we will first look at the official Tropical Forestry Action Plan documents to examine their endorsement of the principle of NGO participation; and, second, review the specific approaches to incorporating NGOs in the planning process as proposed in the FAO guidelines for TFAP implementation.

The original TFAP by FAO and supporting documents by WRI recognize the potential of NGOs in forestry, especially for mobilizing local participation in projects. Although NGOs are not given much attention, the documents recommend that NGOs be strengthened to support grassroots initiatives in tree planting and other forestry activities. The FAO TFAP document proposed that, in a few selected countries, the structures, roles, and needs of NGOs should be assessed so that "the more effective organizations may be strengthened in line with national strategies of forestry and forest industries development in rural areas."¹¹

The importance of local participation in forestry projects was stressed by the original TFAP documents as essential to success. FAO cites local participation as particularly important in activities related to Forest-Based Industrial Development. FAO reviews examples of lack of local community involvement or active opposition to forestry activities as significant failures. It recommends community participation as the solution to poorly received industrial forestry projects:

The first step towards overcoming or avoiding such problems is, of course, to inform the people concerned well in advance of the implementation of the project of the benefits which they will receive from it. The second is to ensure their involvement in the implementation of the project.¹²

Although FAO does not propose local participation in project *planning* as well as implementation, the WRI background document mentions that local involvement in project design is equally relevant.

A role for NGOs in government planning and policy analysis was unclear. The FAO document encouraged environmental conservation groups to become "allies of the foresters in building public opinion and in organizing pressure groups to improve policy, legislation and action programmes."¹³ The WRI *Call for Action* does not mention NGOs in a policy advice role. Overall, participation of local people and NGOs is conceived largely as a means of carrying out successful projects designed by the government with the possible assistance of donor agencies. The role of the public and NGOs in the planning process is essentially unexplored. Planning and policy analysis, according to the FAO and WRI initial documents, appears to be the exclusive domain of the government where public input has little relevance.

IV.

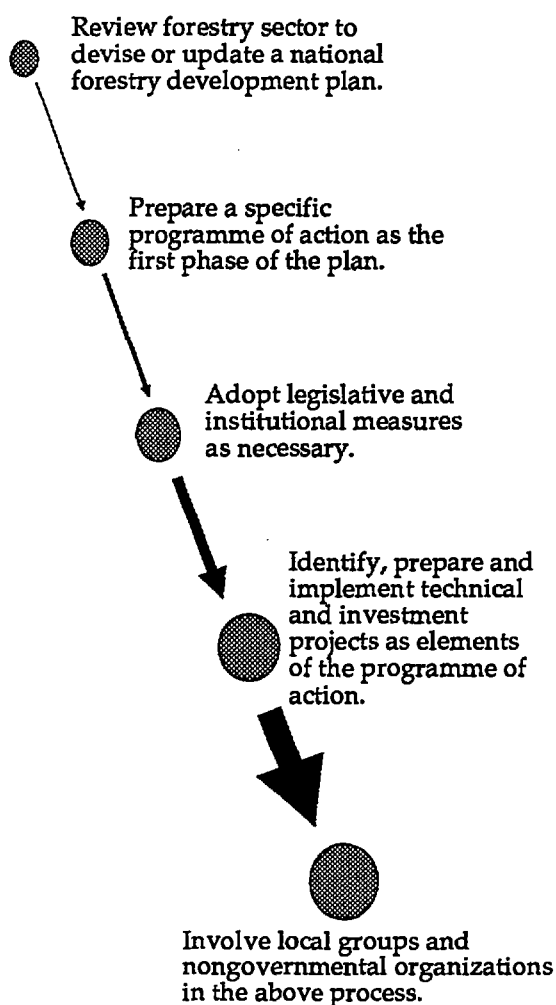
NGO Participation as Outlined in the
FAO Guidelines

Prospects and Limitations

The original TFAP as described by FAO and the WRI background documents, though not stressing a role for NGOs in the formulation of policies, does support some NGO involvement. The short FAO brochure of 1987 was based largely on the WRI *Call For Action*. However, recommendations by NGOs at three regional workshops convened by WRI and the Environment Liaison Center International (ELCI), appear to have had little influence on the final brochure.¹⁴ The brochure gave greater emphasis to NGOs in a variety of roles, including participation in planning workshops. Despite these changes, the brochure depicts local groups and NGOs at the bottom of a planning process and asserts these should be involved in the "above process" (see Figure 1). Such a perspective by the FAO brochure gives the impression that NGO participation is an afterthought in the process. Figure 1.

In the early stages of launching the TFAP, a number of proposals and concept papers on how to promote systematically the participation of NGOs in TFAP exercises were presented by WRI and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) at different forums with development assistance agencies. For example, WRI and IIED proposed a field study of NGO forestry activities in a particular country before of the national forestry sector review.¹⁵ Neither this nor other initiatives were adopted by FAO or the TFAP Forestry Advisers Group.

Figure 1. How To Implement The Plan



Source: FAO, 1987

The basic documents for the TFAP did not propose specific mechanisms for country-level implementation, much less specific methods for ensuring NGO participation. Donor agencies, therefore, adopted the World Bank-style "Forestry Sector Review mission (FSR)" as its main mechanism for implementing the concepts of the TFAP. FSR missions are composed of donor agency forestry experts which prepare a comprehensive review of the forestry sector in cooperation with national government counterparts, usually the Department of Forestry. The FSRs are used to identify potential forestry projects and to recommend forest policy reforms. The FSRs provided a basis for dialog between donor agencies and national governments; NGOs are not given any particular role in the FSR mission process.

Eventually, the advocates of NGO involvement within the TFAP Forestry Advisers Group achieved more specific endorsement for NGO participation through the preparation of guidelines for national exercises, prepared by FAO and finalized with feedback from the Forestry Advisers Group. The FAO "Guidelines for Implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan at Country Level" clarify the intent that NGOs should be effectively included in a national planning process. From 1985 to 1988 FAO and the Forestry Advisers Group developed clearer concepts of how to implement the TFAP at the country-level. By 1989 the guidelines were finalized and contained specific principles of how NGOs should be involved in the process.

These guidelines evolved significantly over time but remained focused on the FSR mission model as the central activity for implementing the TFAP. Early versions of the guidelines (originally termed "approaches" by FAO) discussed FAO's actions extensively and its coordination with the "recipient country," donor agencies, and NGOs. The responsibilities of the "recipient countries" is unclear. The role of NGOs, with the exception of one reference to the composition of "missions," is all the more uncertain.

The FAO guidelines were primarily focused on a relationship between FAO, the national government, and international donors. They define the scope, content, and process of the analysis and its implementation. The national government was responsible for arranging the participation of local NGOs.¹⁶ This focus on conventional channels of development assistance through governmental relations (for example, the Forestry Sector Review missions) allowed little opportunity for *non-governmental* institutions to participate. When participation was allowed, it was specified and controlled by governmental agencies.

In December 1987, at the fifth TFAP Forestry Advisers Group meeting, more detailed guidelines were presented for comment by FAO (see Box 1). Recommendations from WRI, IIED, IUCN and the World Wide Fund for Nature to explicitly define the process for involving NGOs were incorporated into revised guidelines by FAO. IIED/WRI submitted comments to FAO's TFAP Coordinating Unit on the guidelines restating the earlier IIED-WRI proposals on NGO participation in the national TFAP process. Many of IIED-WRI's suggestions were incorporated into parts of the final guidelines.

The revised and final guidelines (completed in August 1988 and officially published in 1989—see FAO, 1989b) outline the following "Basic Concepts and Principles" for NGO participation:

Local and national NGOs have a critical role to play in assuring grassroots participation and must be deliberately and effectively involved in TFAP country-level exercises. The special expertise of international NGOs should be used in their fields. The fields in which NGOs can play a role should be determined in the early stages of the development of a national TFAP, through an active dialogue with the NGO community. As part of the work of preparing a national TFAP, an effort should be made to: a) examine the record of accomplishments and involvement of NGOs and the private sector in the program areas covered under the TFAP; b) analyze, through a consultative process, the constraints encountered and opportunities for more effective involvement in

Box 1. Chronology of Donor and FAO Attention to NGO Participation in the TFAP

December 1984–June 1985. Informal discussions with international NGOs. WRI sponsored International Task Force on Tropical Forests along with World Bank and UNDP.

November 1985. Meeting of senior forestry advisers of international donor agencies in the Hague, to review TFAP prepared by WRI, WB, UNDP and FAO and prepare coordinated donor response. At the meeting national forestry sector reviews were identified as the main mechanism for TFAP implementation. A proposal to ensure the participation and necessary funding of both international and local NGOs in TFAP country missions was presented. The proposal was rejected because the consensus of the meeting was that NGOs participation was a matter to be decided by national governments.

July 1986. FAO circulated "Approaches for the Implementation of the TFAP at Country-level." This paper was the basis for the guidelines. The paper focused primarily on FAO and donor activities.

November 1986. Third TFAP Forestry Advisers Group (TFAP/FAG) meeting: Proposal introduced to create a mechanism for NGO participation in national TFAPs. It recommended a national study and workshop on NGO forestry activities to precede forestry sector review.

May 1987. Fourth TFAP/FAG meeting: WRI and IIED jointly presented a concept paper on NGO participation.

July 1987. Bellagio Strategy Meeting on Tropical Forests I convened by WRI, UNDP, FAO, World Bank and Rockefeller Foundation: WRI presented paper summarizing WRI/Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI) NGO regional workshops on TFAP. ELCI presented: "A Statement by NGOs to the Bellagio Strategy Meeting on Tropical Forests" prepared by representatives from SKEPHI (Indonesia), RADI (Senegal), Fundacion Natura (Ecuador) and Association of Women's Clubs (Zimbabwe).

December 1987. At the fifth TFAP/FAG meeting: Internal guidelines for TFAP implementation presented by FAO for review; WRI reports on ELCI/WRI sponsored NGO regional workshops on TFAP; ELCI presents criticisms of the TFAP; press

release circulated from Friends of the Earth/UK, and Resolution of Asia/Pacific NGOs Conference on Deforestation & Desertification, October 1987, calls for TFAP to be significantly revised.

March 1988. IIED/North America (now WRI/Center) submits comments to FAO on the "Revised Guidelines for Implementing the TFAP at the Country Level." Comments included the need to broaden the process beyond donor/government relations to develop a process that facilitates the participation of NGOs.

May 1988. At the sixth TFAP/FAG meeting: WWF/I, IUCN, WRI, and IIED presented comments on "Revised Guidelines for Addressing Ecosystem Conservation and Indigenous Peoples in Forestry Sector Review Missions under TFAP." Among other concerns, the guidelines call for full consultation with NGOs. The ecosystem conservation guidelines were accepted in whole, except the section concerning indigenous peoples.

A critical article on TFAP from the IFDA Dossier 63, Jan/Feb 1988, was circulated. Forestry Advisers discussed and agreed that every effort should be made to promote and facilitate NGOs' meaningful participation. UNDP called for lead (donor) agencies to make five percent of overall funds for national TFAP exercises available for NGO participation.

July 1988. WRI submits comments on the TFAP Guidelines to the FAO TFAP Coordinator regarding women's issues and representation.

August 1988. FAO circulates its redrafted revised guidelines incorporating some of the suggestions from IIED/WRI Center. Redrafted guidelines incorporate all of ecosystem conservation guidelines as an annex. Some language concerning NGOs, indigenous peoples and women is incorporated into certain sections of the guidelines.

November 1988. Seventh TFAP/FAG meeting: National presentations on the progress of the TFAP for Malaysia and Indonesia were made. The meeting discussed the poor participation by NGOs and concern over the two plans' failure to address people's needs and measures to stop deforesta-

tion and sustainably manage forests. SKEPHI (NGO Network for Forest Conservation in Indonesia), representing ELCI presented a statement: "Tropical Forest Action Plan: Another Industrial Nation Oriented Idea." IIED repeated UNDP's request that five percent of funds for TFAP exercises should be assigned to NGO activities. WRI tabled "Status Report on NGO Participation in Country-Level TFAP Activities."

May 1989. WRI presented different NGO perceptions of the TFAP of NGOs and some of their concerns and perspectives, also tabled the "NGO Status Report No. 2," and presented the results of the NGO Consultation on the Country-Level Implementation of the TFAP. Environmental Policy Institute also presented comments to the Forestry Advisers. After presentations by WRI and other NGOs, the forestry advisers discussed the variety of local NGOs—differing in ideologies, objectives and operations. IIED offered to analyze the different NGO groups and make suggestions on how they could be involved in the TFAP process.

November 1989. Ninth TFAP/FAG meeting: A half-day was designated for member NGOs to speak on the participation of NGOs in the TFAP. WRI reported on the workshop it convened in the Dominican Republic with government and NGO representatives from countries with experience in the national implementation of the TFAP. IIED presented a paper on "The Diversity of NGOs and Their Potential Interaction with TFAP." IUCN and WWF/I encouraged FAO and donors to address ecosystem conservation outside protected areas and consult with NGOs. ELCI challenged the Forestry Advisers to confront the basic cause of deforestation and environmental degradation as a result of the production and consumption of unnecessary commodities. Representatives from COICA (Council of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazonian Basin) presented an alternative Tropical Forestry Action Plan for Peru, consisting of giving secure resource rights and control to indigenous peoples' communities in the Amazon basin of Peru to enable them to continue their sustainable management practices of forest and land resources. COICA's presentation was the first direct representation of indigenous peoples in the TFAP/FA meeting.

these areas; c) provide an opportunity for NGOs and the private sector to identify measures which could be taken to increase and improve their contributions to these program areas."¹⁷

These "Basic Principles and Concepts" provide an important starting point for promoting effective participation of NGOs in national-level TFAPs, but they are still very limited. The basic principles do not explicitly recognize other important functions of NGO participation, such as providing independent perspectives, information, comments on documents, and representing the interests of the rural poor.

The FAO basic principles of NGO participation were also not well supported in the rest of the guidelines—by the operational guidelines, basic checklist and schedule (Annex 2) and general terms of reference (Annex 3). Guidelines for

ecosystem conservation (Annex 1) specifically call for full consultation with local NGOs by the mission team, whereas no other sections make such explicit references to the extent of NGO involvement. Despite references to NGO participation, the guidelines do not elaborate on the mechanisms other than what is proposed in the basic principles for "deliberately and effectively" involving NGOs.

In sum, the guidelines effectively limit NGO participation by focusing on the use of the World Bank-style FSR which is ill-suited to incorporate the participation of NGOs. Although NGOs are mentioned in the guidelines, inadequate attention is given to creating an appropriate mechanism for their involvement. Neither was any attempt made to examine and address the many constraints that might limit their participation.

V.

Analysis of NGO Participation in TFAP Implementation

The attention given to NGO participation by FAO and the Forestry Advisers over the last five years amounted to very limited monitoring of country-level NGO participation and provided little documentation or detailed qualitative information. This is not surprising, however, because the TFAP guidelines and the mandate of the FAO TFAP Coordinating Unit do not have any reporting requirements concerning NGO participation. On the positive side, the FAO TFAP Coordinating Unit and the TFAP Forestry Advisers Group discuss NGO participation at each of the biannual meetings. The TFAP Forestry Advisers Group debate the merits and legitimacy of NGOs regularly. Some national TFAP representatives report on NGO involvement in the country exercise. More recently, the TFAP Forestry Advisers Group meetings have allotted time for international NGO representatives to present their views. NGO representatives, however, are slated only to discuss "NGO participation in the TFAP" and not necessarily specific topics of their choice, such as policy reform or conservation strategies. Ultimately, these discussions and TFAP Coordinating Unit activities have resulted in incomplete monitoring.

WRI has attempted since 1988 to systematically monitor and document NGO participation through the periodic "Status Report on NGO Participation in TFAP Country-Level Activities."¹⁸ The information had been gathered both formally—through survey questionnaires—and informally from a variety of NGO, donor and

national government sources.¹⁹ In addition to the NGO Status Report, WRI has collected information on NGO participation from its national-level experience with TFAPs in a number of countries²⁰ and from two international workshops organized by WRI.²¹

Table 1 provides baseline data extracted by WRI on the quality and extent of NGO involvement in various national TFAP activities.²² Although much of the necessary data for a comprehensive analysis is not widely available, this table provides the basis for a general analysis of NGO participation in 25 countries that have a TFAP process underway. The information and analysis from the table should be read as indicative of the type of results occurring in the implementation of the TFAP.

The following provides observations regarding NGO participation based on each of the 15 items enumerated in Table 1.

| |
|---|
| <p><i>Item 1. "TFAP exercise includes survey of NGOs"</i></p> |
|---|

In 8 out of 17 countries for which data are adequate, the TFAP exercise included some kind of survey of NGO activities or other systematic efforts to establish baseline data on NGO activities and interests in forest resources development and conservation. In Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, and Ecuador these efforts were initiated by local and international NGOs using their own resources. In the case of Tanzania, Zaire, Costa Rica, and

Papua New Guinea these efforts were supported by the government and donor agencies. In all cases of a systematic survey of NGOs, an international NGO was instrumental in proposing and supporting it with financial and technical resources.

Item 2. "NGOs consulted in preliminary stage"

In 8 of the 25 countries, NGOs had "some" to "good" involvement in the beginning of the TFAP exercise, including activities such as discussing the need for such an exercise, its scope, process and structure; specific terms of reference and issues papers. In the preliminary stages, 17 countries have "no" to "minimal" NGO involvement. Many more NGOs were involved to some degree, later in the process, after FAO, donors, and national governments had worked out the scope and process of exercise.

Item 3. "NGOs submitted reports for TFAP"

Item 4. "NGOs reviewed TFAP draft reports"

Item 5. "NGO comments incorporated into final drafts"

Of the 18 countries for which there are reasonably good data, 5 of eighteen allowed for a "modest" to "good" amount of direct NGO input into the TFAP working documents (for example, writing parts of the strategy itself), although more opportunity was allowed for NGOs to comment on documents (8 of 20 had "some" to "good" opportunity—see item number 4). Whether or not these comments were incorporated into the documents (item number 5) is unclear in most cases.

Item 6. "NGOs attended TFAP seminars/workshops"

Item 7. "NGOs presented papers at seminars"

NGO participation occurred largely through attendance at TFAP seminars. Of 22 countries, 12 had "some-good" NGO participation NGOs in

workshops and formal meetings. Of 22 countries, 7 had minimal to no participation.

Attendance did not equate to active participation and, in some cases, NGOs were only invited as observers. In only 3 out of 14 countries was participation rated "some-good" regarding NGOs presenting papers in the TFAP workshops.

Item 8. "Local NGOs members of national TFAP mission or steering committee"

In 7 Latin American countries at least some part of the NGO community (for example, conservation groups) were strongly represented on TFAP planning bodies and were actively involved. In 11 of 23 countries, NGOs were not members of the TFAP mission team or national steering committee.

Item 9. "Technical support provided to local NGOs for participation in TFAP"

In 6 of 16 countries, technical support was provided to NGOs in order to help them participate in the TFAP process.

The government planning department of Colombia, with support from the Netherlands Government, provided assistance to a few conservation NGOs to help them develop project profiles for the TFAP exercise. Technical support in other cases was given directly by international NGOs, particularly IIED and WRI, in the cases of Tanzania, Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, Zaire, Burkina Faso, Ecuador.

Item 10. "NGOs submitted project profiles for funding consideration"

Of the 11 countries for which data have been obtained, officials in 6 of them received and accepted project profiles submitted by NGOs for funding consideration.

Item 11. "Plans identify NGOs in project implementation"

Item 12. "Projects to give technical assistance to NGOs"

In a number of countries (10 of 16), plans identify NGOs as implementers of projects under the TFAP. Only Tanzania and Papua New Guinea (assisted by IIED) identify the need to institutionally strengthen domestic NGOs. It is unclear if technical assistance needs have been identified in any other countries.

Item 13. "NGOs involved represent conservation issues"

Item 14. "NGOs involved represent rural development issues"

A breakdown of types of NGOs—conservation groups and rural development NGOs—shows that of the NGOs represented, conservation groups were better represented in the process. To the extent that NGOs were involved at all, 18 countries showed that conservation issues were represented by the groups. Rural development organizations were represented among NGOs involved in 12 countries.

Item 15. "International NGOs involved in preparatory/mission/follow up stage"

International NGOs played a significant role in 6 countries and contributed to lesser degrees in 5

other countries. In 14 other cases, international NGOs either did not participate (4 countries) or their participation is unknown. IIED, WRI, IUCN and WWF contributed to preparatory work for forest policy reviews and to a lesser extent for TFAP exercises in Zaire and Cameroon. IIED and IUCN have participated in a number of donor missions and other means of participation in a number of countries (for example, PNG, Tanzania, Laos, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Zaire, Costa Rica). In other countries, international NGOs have offered other types of assistance. In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Ecuador, IIED and WRI have independently (using internal resources) provided technical assistance to local NGOs to enable them to participate more effectively and to strengthen their own institutional capabilities.

Greenpeace (US) and Rainforest Information Centre (Australia) have assisted local NGOs in Papua New Guinea in analyzing tropical forest issues and providing an extensive and detailed critique of the national TFAP. These activities in Papua New Guinea were all undertaken with internal resources. These groups continue to assist PNG NGOs and customary landowners.

VI.

Effective NGO Participation: Gaining Ground or Standing Still?

Table 1 shows that NGOs have not participated fully in national TFAPs. NGO participation in the planning process is uneven at best, falling far short of the participation objectives espoused by donors and government actors.

Despite these shortfalls, a number of important steps towards full participation, consensus building and political commitment to policy reforms, and mobilization of human resources have also occurred as a result of national TFAP exercises. The following questions and answers present highlights of the main advances stimulated by the country TFAP process toward a broadly participatory process and analysis of the main factors still limiting the quality of NGO participation in country-level TFAP planning processes.

- 1) Have NGOs gained legitimacy among governmental bodies as participants in the planning process?

Some NGOs have been allowed a greater voice for their concerns in governmental forums. By endorsing participation of NGOs, the TFAP framework helps to legitimize views from outside government. In a number of countries, local NGOs have reported that the TFAP, despite many shortcomings, is the first comprehensive governmental planning process to officially allow non-governmental input to any degree.

For example, despite widely recognized inadequacies with the TFAP process in Indonesia, WALHI (Indonesian Environmental Forum) is committed to participating in the TFAP process because "this is the only Ministry of Forestry policy development forum in which NGOs are officially included."²³ WALHI does not endorse the current draft plan but through its participation hopes to help transform the plan into what its constituents would consider an acceptable and useful document.

Winning a place at the table does not ensure that participants will have an opportunity to influence the process. For example, the WALHI recommendation for full consultation with NGOs and local people and access to forestry documents was reportedly excluded from the official record of the roundtable meeting.²⁴ Despite this, a place at the table is a small step toward a process that provides a respectful environment and mutually agreed terms for NGOs to contribute to the planning process.

Despite some gains, only rarely has the NGO community played an important role in the formulation of the national TFAP. Efforts to inform interested parties about the TFAP were concentrated among international development assistance agencies, government Forestry Departments, and political leaders. As reflected in Table 1, at the initiation of a TFAP, NGOs were not well consulted. At least 8 countries of the 25 analyzed had no or very minimal NGO

participation altogether (Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Fiji, Malaysia, Indonesia, Belize).

In Senegal and a number of other countries, many NGOs with good institutional capacity exist and have organized into NGO consortium groups. These organizations could supply baseline data on NGO activities without great effort. However, a major Senegalese NGO and a TFAP team member have indicated that there had been no significant involvement of NGOs in the formulation of the national TFAP.

National governments and, to a lesser extent, donors perceive few incentives to include NGOs in the TFAP process. To date, despite much rhetoric, effective participation by NGOs has not been considered an essential part of the process for developing a national TFAP. NGOs from 15 tropical countries surveyed overwhelmingly identified governmental lack of interest in NGO input as the reason for failure to better involve NGOs in the TFAP process. None thought that the government was unaware of NGOs and their activities.

A number of reasons have limited government and donor interest in seeking to involve NGOs. First, many countries have weak democratic traditions and the governments do not welcome dissenting perspectives.²⁵ Second, many governments and donors are skeptical about NGO capabilities to contribute to the process. Many governmental agencies believe that a successful planning exercise needs only technical experts and executing agencies.²⁶ Involving NGOs also requires greater flexibility and special efforts to solicit their input than a conventional technical planning exercise. Third, national governments may see NGOs as competing for limited external funds.²⁷ Thus national governments often intentionally seek to restrict discussions on the TFAP to international donor agencies and themselves.

- 2) Can NGOs participate in an environment based on mutual respect?

In a number of countries NGOs have been able to contribute substantially to the debate and have openly challenged the conventional analysis and problem-solving approach of governmental institutions. To a limited extent, some NGOs have gained access to the realm of government decision making. Some national governments have shown respect for the NGOs as independent institutions by allowing their active participation in meetings and working groups or by accepting project proposals or comments on official documents. NGOs in countries like Ecuador participated in national TFAP seminars and were insistent that the national TFAP had overlooked severely skewed distribution of land ownership, and land use policies concerning petroleum exploration, agro-industry, colonization, gold mining, logging, and tourist concessions. These issues, many NGOs contend, are of vital concern to sustainable forest use. Although these issues were not adequately incorporated into the revised documents, the TFAP roundtable for Ecuador was a unique opportunity for a broad spectrum of governmental and nongovernmental representatives to directly present their positions on these issues in the same forum.²⁸

In most cases, NGOs have been significantly limited in their role as participants in the TFAP process. Donors are often unaware of NGO capabilities; both donors and national governments may prejudice or incorrectly generalize on their capabilities and experience. As the original TFAP documents stressed, because NGOs often are viewed primarily as mobilizers of local participation NGOs need to be considered only at the implementation stage of the national TFAP. In the case of Ghana, NGOs appear not to have been consulted in the formulation of the TFAP but are identified as implementing agencies.

In a number of other countries, NGOs that did not participate in TFAP discussions were identified to carry out projects. During the TFAP planning process for Bolivia, the lowland indigenous peoples federation, CIDOB, broke off negotiations with the government over a proposed forestry project. The project, despite CIDOB's refusal to endorse it, was included in the final plan and

identified CIDOB as one of the implementing agencies.

National governments often arrange for only minimal participation of NGOs. Reluctant to share decision making with other groups in society, governments often attempt to circumscribe NGO involvement in the planning process. Often government agencies simply involve the organizations they find most acceptable.

For example, the Indonesian minister of forestry indicated that a number of private forestry industry association "NGOs" had been involved in the TFAP/Indonesia. The minister also said that other "reliable" NGOs would be invited to attend a TFAP/Indonesia workshop. A number of environmental NGOs including two Indonesian NGOs were eventually invited to the national roundtable (Type II) on short notice but were not given access to many of the most important official documents. Despite repeated requests, the Indonesian NGOs (along with all other participants including donors) were denied access to the 40 World Bank-FAO Forestry Sector Review Studies that form the basis for the summary draft TFAP document. WALHI reported that "ironically, the [forestry sector] reviews were prominently displayed during the meeting, though securely wrapped in plastic and taped together."²⁹

In the case of Malaysia, NGO participation has been carefully controlled by the government. Malaysian NGO participation has amounted only to attendance at a few meetings. The Malaysia TFAP and any related draft documents have remained confidential throughout the process.

Reluctance to work with NGOs on mutually respectful terms is not only common among national governments but also among many of the donor agencies and FAO. Although some donor agencies or individual staff members of donor agencies have made deliberate efforts to involve NGOs and consult with local peoples, donors generally lack the same democratic processes that many national governments do.³⁰ Full acceptance of a range of roles for NGOs in the TFAP planning process is still evolving and reflects the need for

larger institutional reforms within development assistance agencies.³¹

3) Is NGO participation having an impact on policies?

In some cases, the TFAP has increased NGO access to and influence on the decision-making process. The rules of confidentiality among national and international governmental agencies generally have taken precedence over the TFAP framework's endorsement of effective NGO participation, but the TFAP process has led to an improvement in access to official documents in a number of countries. For example, NGO membership on national steering committees provided direct access to government documents (see Item 8, Table 1). In other countries (namely, Peru and Costa Rica) individual staff members from NGOs were hired as consultants to the TFAP process. These individuals participated on the TFAP FSR team and helped prepare official reports. These individuals (though not representing their institutions) had direct access to documents.

Beyond attendance at meetings and access to documents, the TFAP process in a few countries was actually influenced by the participation of NGOs. A number of NGOs felt that, despite many shortcomings, their involvement improved aspects of the national TFAP. For example, a national environmental NGO consortium, LIDEMA, which participated extensively in the TFAP for Bolivia, believes that NGOs contributed to the TFAP exercise by improving the information base and drawing attention to forest ecosystem conservation. A national environmental organization, Fundaci;n Natura, in Colombia, also claims success in influencing conservation priorities.

Despite these new opportunities within the TFAP framework, many NGOs find little incentive to be involved in government meetings and planning exercises. NGOs often feel that they are not listened to and gain little from their investment of time and energy in the process. Many NGOs point to the questionable productivity of their involvement in previous government meetings.

They are skeptical that their views will truly influence the outcome of official decision making and fear that their participation will be misconstrued as an unqualified endorsement of government policies. The prominent environmental NGO, Fundacion Natura of Ecuador, and the national indigenous peoples federation, CONFENIAE, both resigned from the national TFAP steering committee because government officials refused to analyze forest issues from an intersectoral approach.

NGOs are also skeptical of governmental commitment to confront major political issues driving deforestation such as inequitable distribution of land. NGOs representing the interests of marginalized groups and the poor majority often propose alternatives to current development patterns. A major issue among many NGOs working with the rural poor is agrarian reform (this issue is most important in Latin America and Asia). In TFAP related seminars in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador, NGO participants repeatedly raised issues regarding agrarian reform. Their concerns, however, were not addressed by the government officials or TFAP documents.³²

4) Is TFAP stimulating more NGO action and cooperation?

In a few countries, the TFAP has been a catalyst for mobilizing human and financial resources along with consciousness among NGOs and the public at large. In some cases, the national TFAP planning process raised expectations among different groups in society and generated greater awareness for forest resource issues. In the Dominican Republic, the NGO community was dissatisfied with the national TFAP's halting progress, analysis of issues and limited participation. Given the national TFAP's uncertain status, a national NGO consortium, CEDOIS, challenged the government by declaring that NGOs would develop their own national forestry action plan to be financed and implemented by their own resources. Ultimately, the development of the official TFAP for the Dominican Republic was

resumed, and NGOs played a significant role in shaping the projects agenda.

In Ecuador, a wide range of NGOs were aware of the TFAP and a number of them participated in various forums. However, as many became disillusioned with the process and the government's ability to address what they saw as the main causes of deforestation, NGOs spoke out against the government process. National daily newspapers published a number of opinion articles on the TFAP/Ecuador and prospects for addressing forest resource problems. This debate has indisputably raised the awareness of the public about the issues at stake.

5) Summary: Modest steps toward participatory decision-making

In sum, progress has been very modest toward more participatory TFAP planning processes. Slow progress is not surprising to some—one African NGO representative stressed at a TFAP evaluation workshop that democratic processes cannot be expected in countries ruled by undemocratic regimes. Yet higher expectations for the involvement of NGOs and concerned members of society have indeed been generated by the continuous endorsement of NGO participation from the international development assistance community. Evident from an analysis of the TFAP documents and the indicators available from Table 1, the effort required to achieve comprehensive participation was negligently underestimated.

Inadequate participation of NGOs in the TFAP is symptomatic of larger obstacles to participatory development processes. Since TFAP's inception, FAO and the TFAP Forestry Advisers Group endorsed the concept of NGO participation in varying degrees but gave far too little attention to addressing the constraints on its realization. Most important among these constraints is governmental reluctance or inexperience with incorporating the public and NGOs in planning and decision-making processes. Independent organizations are often not acceptable to the government; indeed, national governments sometimes find NGOs a threat to their authority. Many governments view

development initiatives, organization of people, provision of services, and policy decisions as the sole responsibility of the state. National governments are often uncomfortable with sharing any part of the decision making with nongovernmental institutions. This can lead governments to place restrictions on NGOs including regulation, cooption or more severe forms of control.

Donor agencies, as representatives of governmental agencies, also maintain similar reluctance or inability to involve NGOs. Despite donors' possible interest in ensuring that development assistance supports the needs and aspirations of broader society, NGO participation is still constrained by donor reticence about contacting local NGOs independently, or encouraging governments to involve NGOs. Donors may also be hindered by their inexperience in working with NGOs on the policy level.

In addition to these constraints on government receptivity to NGO participation, the NGO community as a whole is weak. Bratton points out that NGOs are in danger of being oversold because their "positive reputation has arisen by default—as a response to the shortcomings of state interventions—rather than from a systematic review of concrete accomplishments."³³ Thus, the overall weakness of the NGO community also hinders effective participation. As many NGOs lack democratic structures, accountability, or credibility with their constituencies, they may not be able to represent appropriately the sections of society they seek to serve.

Monitoring NGO participation and analyzing the results demonstrates that an effective participatory process is needed to address the above mentioned constraints. Because none of

these obstacles are easily overcome, commitment to good-faith initiatives from all concerned parties is essential. Many examples from experience with national TFAP planning show that new levels of democratic decision making are possible.

A representative from the Colombian NGO Fundacion Natura summed up the contribution the national TFAP process has made to more comprehensive planning and steps toward sustainable use of forest resources:

The Forestry Action Plan for Colombia created possibilities for strengthening those sectors which have traditionally been marginalized from development policies in the country. Of course this is not saying that existing conflicts of distinct actors in forestry (e.g. logging companies versus conservation groups or grassroots communities) have been overcome, but yes, it has opened a space for dialog.

The TFAP does not yet have capacity to confront deforestation but it represents a political compromise through a broadened definition of the forestry sector and enhanced linkages to other sectors. This is exemplified in the programs such as land use planning, conservation, restoration ecology and social forestry.³⁴

Fundacion Natura's contention—that although the national TFAP process has not resolved the basic conflicts perpetuating deforestation, broader participation in the planning process has contributed to an increased dialog on deforestation issues—is also true to varying degrees in a number of TFAP country exercises, for example, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, Zaire, Ecuador, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, and Peru. Much more is needed, but some progress has been achieved.

VII. Conclusions

The record of NGO participation in the TFAP is disappointing when measured against the objectives of the TFAP brochure and guidelines, and more importantly when measured against the progressive impoverishment of hundreds of millions of people struggling to sustain a livelihood on a rapidly degrading natural resource base.

The TFAP planning process has not yet caused a transformation of decision-making processes that exclude input from local peoples and marginalized groups. Nor have conventional patterns of development assistance and government policies, which often contribute to the destruction of forest resources, been adequately reassessed. The TFAP planning process has to some extent, however, drawn attention to these issues. It has created an opportunity for some NGOs to participate in national forest resource planning processes. The modest evolution in expectations, that the TFAP should be an open and inclusive process, offers hope that spokespersons for underrepresented concerns can gain legitimacy.

An alternative to the current process that focuses on official bilateral negotiation needs to be instituted. An in-country structure that provides for a more consultative process, building on the

perspectives and experience of a broad range of concerned groups and institutions, should replace the current way of carrying out a national TFAP. Within such a nationally based structure, NGOs should be represented. A number of countries such as Colombia have instituted national steering committees composed of members from various sectors, both governmental and nongovernmental. An interdisciplinary national steering committee with a fully staffed secretariat can provide the basic administrative structure for carrying out a broadly participatory planning process.

Donor institutions, too, can play an important role in supporting this national process by providing technical and financial assistance to the national steering committee and secretariat. Beyond exercising their directly supportive role, donors should work with national and local groups, both governmental and nongovernmental, to ensure the quality of the TFAP exercise. Specifically, donor agencies must use their influence with cooperating national governments to ensure political space for public input in the planning process. This process may provide greater opportunity for the concerns of marginalized groups in society to be more honestly reflected in government policies and plans.

VIII.

Recommendations for Improving NGO Participation in the TFAP

Robert Winterbottom's *Taking Stock* outlines the necessary overall reforms and new management structure to make the TFAP work (see Appendix C).³⁵ In addition to these essential reforms, the following general recommendations address the role of NGOs with an aim toward building a broadly representative participatory process. See Appendix D for "Recommendations for Guidelines for NGO Participation in the Implementation of a National TFAP."

General Recommendations

- 1) *A set of criteria should be developed for who should contribute to ensure that all the relevant institutions have an opportunity to be involved.*

These criteria should be established through consultation and agreement with a broad range of concerned groups, including NGOs. The participation of institutions, inside and outside government, should be based on their capacity to provide accurate information about the needs and concerns of local people most affected by forest land use decisions, as well as accurate information on other aspects of forest resources, ecosystems, land use conflicts and related socioeconomic factors. Also, institutions having authority over activities or generating activities themselves that affect forest resources should also be involved—such as local governments, government agencies concerned with agriculture, resettlement, agrarian reform, energy, mining, transportation,

indigenous peoples affairs; forestry industry; and NGOs working on local-level activities in forest resource management and rural development.

- 2) *To promote broad participation there should be full disclosure of TFAP-related information: it should be widely available and disseminated to interested groups.*

Review of the existing information base by a wide range of parties will help to improve its accuracy as these parties can offer additions and corrections to any relevant documents in preparing a TFAP. This is vital at the national level. It also applies to the international level as many international institutions could contribute to the accuracy of the information and to the accountability of implementing institutions. Readily accessible information is a prerequisite to effective monitoring of TFAP exercises. Information available at national and international levels should include reporting on the participation of concerned institutions, including NGOs, in the national TFAP.

- 3) *Consultative mechanisms with NGOs should be activated at the very outset of a national TFAP process.*

The conventional sectoral donor/government relationship characteristic of a "Forestry Sector Review" is inadequate for consultations.

Nongovernmental groups representing the concerns of the rural poor, women, indigenous peoples, biodiversity conservation, and other marginalized interests should be involved from the beginning. To mobilize effective participation of representative nongovernmental groups, a participatory strategy needs to be developed at the outset of the exercise. Participating national and local government agencies, NGOs, and donors should design this strategy.

If the national government and NGO community are inexperienced in such a participatory strategy for planning, competent international NGOs and other specialists could assist local NGOs as well as governments and donor agencies. Donors and international NGOs should assist local NGOs and government agencies to strengthen their ability to carry out such consultations with community groups, constituents, and local people.

To ensure effective representation of public concerns, the participatory strategy should begin with a survey that identifies what organizations exist, what their activities are, and whom they represent. The participatory strategy has two main purposes: to collect more accurate information about the resource base and the needs and concerns of local peoples; and to generate popular support for the implementation of the national TFAP.³⁶ Participation is not the flow of information in one direction only—that is, from grassroots to national policymakers, or vice versa. Rather, it should be an iterative exchange, a mutual process of learning and clarification of needs, problems, and possible solutions for all parties.

Local NGOs should determine what resources are needed for their effective participation. At least 5 percent of the budget for conducting national level TFAPs should be allocated for a process of consultation with local communities, underrepresented groups, and independent organizations. Funding should be provided for activities such as information gathering, workshops, and report preparation by NGOs. The output of these activities and other grassroots

experiences, concerns, and insights should be incorporated into the TFAP process.

4) *NGOs should better demonstrate their institutional advantage for being included in an innovative policy analysis and planning process.*

NGOs need to make a compelling case for their integral involvement (as suggested under the new criteria in Recommendation 1). NGOs should demonstrate to national governments and international donors that they can contribute to any of the following essential tasks:

- *Representation of popular concerns and disadvantaged people's concerns:* Through prior consultation with their constituencies, many NGOs already have much capacity to provide a clear perspective on their constituencies' concerns regarding forest resource use.
- *Further investigation and systematic documentation and analysis of peoples' concerns:* Beyond representation, NGOs can provide independent, accurate data, research and analysis on forest resource conditions, management and socioeconomic issues (for example, land and resource tenure, demographics). NGOs often have information to fill gaps in official data or have more current or otherwise accurate information than the official information.
- *Facilitation of popular discussion and participation in the development and implementation of strategies:* NGOs can generate public discussion through a variety of means. Doing so, they will be able to validate their own capacity to represent and document peoples' interests. NGOs should inform their constituencies of the activities under the TFAP framework and the importance of their involvement. NGO networks and consortia (national, subnational, and international) have a particularly important role to play in informing and facilitating the effective

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participation and contribution of their member groups. International NGO networks (such as the Environmental Liaison Center International) should be encouraged to provide timely information and assistance to national groups for their effective participation in national TFAP exercises.

As these NGO-constituent groups influence the analysis and priorities of a national TFAP, their stake in ensuring its implementation will grow apace. NGOs should continue contributing to the process by independently monitoring the national TFAPs' implementation.

Notes

1. WRI, 1985.
2. FAO, 1985.
3. FAO, 1987.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 29.
6. See Hazlewood, 1987; WCED, 1987; Richards, 1990.
7. See World Bank, 1986; Government of Tanzania, 1989.
8. Hazlewood, 1987; Government of Tanzania, 1989.
9. David Richards, personal communication, August, 1990.
10. Government of Tanzania, 1989; IIED, 1989.
11. FAO, 1985. p. 135.
12. Ibid., p. 41.
13. Ibid., p. 13.
14. These meetings with NGOs convened by WRI and ELC were an effort to correct for the lack of NGO consultation in the development of TFAP documents up to that time. However, consultation with NGOs after the formulation of the TFAP documents appear to have had only marginal impact on ongoing and subsequent activities. Many NGOs felt that their recommendations to the framers of the TFAP were largely unaddressed and remained part of a indefinite "unfinished agenda," (see Muchiru, 1987, p.3).
15. See WRI-IIED, 1987.
16. FAO, *Guidelines*, 1989b, section 3.2 (i).
17. Ibid., p.4. This language is similar in the range of activities proposed by WRI-IIED (May 1987). The WRI-IIED proposal for a NGO field study to precede an FSR mission, however, included a suggested workplan.
18. See WRI "Status Report on NGO Participation" December 1988–April 1990.
19. See survey questionnaire, Appendix 1.
20. WRI has assisted national governments, aid agencies and NGOs in developing national TFAPs in Zaire, Cameroon, Ecuador, Guatemala, Burkina Faso, and Central American countries for the Central American TFAP.
21. See WRI April 1989 and WRI, November 1989.
22. See Appendix 2.
23. WALHI, 11 June 1990.

24. See Memorandum by WALHI, June 11, 1990. See also, WALHI, 29-31 May 1990.

25. For example, the Government of Malaysia is reluctant to share in decision making. According to NGOs in Malaysia, the TFAP document for Malaysia was protected under the "Official Secrets Act" which carried a punishment of up to one year in prison if found in the possession of an unauthorized individual. See also Colchester, 1989, p. 43.

26. At the WRI-hosted "NGO Consultation on the Implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan," one African NGO representative noted that NGOs had minimal participation in his country's TFAP because the government believes NGOs lack technical expertise. Yet these organizations, he asserted, work directly with people in the villages and can serve to link the people to the government.

27. See Bratton, 1989, p.573.

28. NGOs felt that respect for NGO concerns was so limited that the NGOs participating in the national steering committee later resigned and some actively oppose the national TFAP.

29. See WALHI, 1990a.

30. See, for example, the letter from SKEPHI to Barber Conable, President of the World Bank dated May 22, 1990. (1990c). SKEPHI contended that the World Bank had neglected to circulate the final draft of the Forestry Project No.2 before finalizing it, as it had promised it would do.

31. World Bank-NGO Committee was established in 1982, Operational Manual Statement prepared by World Bank on collaboration with NGOs was issued August 1988 (World Bank, 1988). Also see Cernea, 1988.

32. Beth Floyd, 1989. and Rodrigo Calero, COMUNIDEC, personal communication, May 1990. Not only did a number of NGOs vigorously participate in the roundtable, but COMUNIDEC and WRI also jointly submitted written comments to the national TFAP coordinator before the meeting.

33. Bratton, 1989, p. 572. See also Garilao, 1987.

34. Andrade, 1989, pp. 4-5.

35. See Winterbottom, 1990.

36. See Hellinger, et al., 1988, Appendix A.

Appendix A:

Questionnaire for NGO Status Report

Respondent's Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Introduction: World Resources Institute is helping to monitor the nature and extent of nongovernmental organizations' (NGO) involvement in national Tropical Forestry Action Plans (TFAP). This questionnaire will be an important means to obtain information for the "Status Report on NGO Participation in Country-Level TFAP Activities." With your assistance, this report will be regularly updated and presented to the TFAP Advisors Group meetings, and made available to interested NGOs, donors, governments, research institutions, and others.

Instructions for questionnaire: Please check appropriate answers. If you find the answers provided are inadequate or not applicable, please write in what you feel is a more appropriate response.

1. Are you familiar with the TFAP or similar national forestry planning process using the TFAP framework in your country?

☐ yes ☐ no

2. Do NGOs have any involvement in the national TFAP?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unsure

3. To what degree are NGOs involved?

☐ none ☐ insignificant
☐ somewhat ☐ significant

4. If *none* or *insignificant*, please indicate the major reasons for the low level of NGO involvement in the TFAP:

- ☐ Active opposition by government to NGOs' involvement.
- ☐ Government unaware of NGOs and their activities.
- ☐ Government aware but disinterested in NGOs' input.
- ☐ Donors assisting government with preparation of TFAP reports appear unaware or uninterested in NGO activities.
- ☐ NGOs consulted at beginning of process but given no further attention.
- ☐ Other, please specify:

5. If *some* or *significant* involvement for #3, in what ways? [see Annex 1 of the NGO Status Report for information on the potential for NGO participation in the TFAP process]

- ☐ NGOs helped prepare background documents; please specify subject of documents:
- ☐ NGO representative(s) participated on the team which coordinated the national TFAP process.
- ☐ Participated in initial government sponsored TFAP planning meetings.
- ☐ Participated in national seminars to discuss/review TFAP strategies and projects.
- ☐ Participated in TFAP international donors roundtable meeting.

VOICES FROM THE MARGIN

- ☐ Made oral presentations at any of the above TFAP meetings.
- ☐ Submitted or presented forestry related project proposals for funding consideration by government or international donors.

6. Do you think those NGOs which are significantly involved in the TFAP adequately represent the concerns of rural poor people, which need to be addressed by the national TFAP?

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unsure

Do you think those NGOs represented the concerns of ecosystem conservation?

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unsure

7. Specify the type(s) of NGOs represented in the TFAP process; check as many as are appropriate.

- ☐ environmental NGOs:
- ☐ primarily concerned with conservation of biological resources.
- ☐ headquartered in large urban centers.
- ☐ operating field projects.
- ☐ focused on advocacy/public education.
- ☐ development NGOs working with the rural poor:
- ☐ small commercial forest resource users
- ☐ women's groups
- ☐ indigenous peoples
- ☐ other:
- ☐ local community-based organizations.
- ☐ NGO consortiums
- ☐ organizations closely linked (in funding, programs and/or personnel) to government.
- ☐ other:

8. Do you believe that NGOs which were significantly involved in the TFAP directly influenced the process and outcome?

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unsure
- ☐ too early to assess

9. Did the TFAP process result in any of the following?

- ☐ improvement in government - NGO relations.
- ☐ no change in government - NGO relations.
- ☐ deterioration in government - NGO relations.
- ☐ other, please explain:

10. Through NGO participation, is there evidence of changes in:

- ☐ government policy.
- ☐ project funding priorities.
- ☐ national priorities related to forest resources.
- ☐ other; please specify:

Please cite specific examples of significant contributions made through the participation of NGOs in the national TFAP process:

11. Please list the names of NGOs involved in TFAP:

12. Please add any comments not addressed in the above questions below or a separate sheet, if needed. We would also be interested in copies of relevant documents related to NGO participation in TFAP exercises. Likewise, we would be pleased to share any documents we may have on a national TFAP or other information upon request.

THANK YOU!

PLEASE RETURN TO: Forestry and Land Use Program, World Resources Institute 1709 New York Ave., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20006
USA Tel. 202-638-3600, Telex 64414 WRI WASH,
Fax 202-638-0036

Appendix B: Background To Information Collection And Analysis

Methods for collection of information for NGO Status Report

The information for the "Status Report on NGO Participation in Country-Level TFAP Activities" was derived from a number of sources, including international NGOs (i.e. ECLI, IIED, WWF/CF) national governments and donors. Most importantly, information is systematically gathered from national/local NGOs in TFAP countries. The first NGO status report in December 1988 covered 23 of the 55 TFAP countries; sources for information varied greatly as this report was compiled informally and without systematic consultation with national NGOs. The second NGO status report compiled in June 1989 covered 27 of a total 62 countries. Questionnaires were sent to 31 NGOs in TFAP countries, 10 responded (response rate of 32 percent). The third NGO status report covered 32 of 64 TFAP countries. Thirty-seven questionnaires were sent to national NGOs; 14 responded (response rate of 39 percent). The surveys used in collecting information are an open-ended format. The responses varied and additional information was obtained from other sources.

Construction of the table on qualitative data of NGO participation

The Table 1 was constructed with a specific focus, a few important elements should be mentioned:

1) The table attempts to express some of the key elements of NGO participation but not all aspects of NGO participation and TFAP activities are presented in this table. Please see the NGO Status report includes more details in narrative form.

2) The specific focus of type of NGOs involved is on those representing rural peoples' and ecosystem conservation concerns. Industry associations are not considered here unless they are community-based enterprises. An attempt have been made to focus on two vital concerns within the private sector: livelihoods derived from forests resources including artisanal organizations (rather than larger commercial operations), and conservation of forest ecosystems.

3) International NGOs are specifically identified in item no. 15. In other activities, such as independently providing small grants and technical assistance to NGOs, some of their efforts are included in no. 12 which notes that a number of cases, NGOs initiated the activity. In all these cases, international NGOs assisted local NGOs in providing this information and acted as an advocate for their participation.

4) In a few countries, the TFAP process is not complete thus project profiles have not been prepared (i.e. Burkina Faso and Mali).

5) The focus of the NGO Status Report and the table are exclusively on direct participation by NGOs in national TFAP planning efforts and do not report on the activities and discussions occurring internationally. A number of international NGOs have published critiques of the

TFAP (most notably *Forestry Crisis and Forestry Myths: A Critical Review of Tropical Forests: A Call to Action* by Vandana Shiva, World Rainforest Movement, 1987. More recently, World Rainforest Movement/the Ecologist/Friends of the Earth has published a critique of a number of national TFAP documents: *The Tropical Forestry Action Plan: What Progress?*, 1990.

Appendix C:

Proposal For A New Management Structure For TFAP

From *Taking Stock* by Robert Winterbottom

International Steering Committee

Premise: such a Committee is needed to fill the present void of oversight and control over the TFAP by an independent group that is not dominated by forestry, development assistance agencies or commercial interests, and less sensitive to issues of "national sovereignty" than intergovernmental and public agencies.

Representation: to include representatives of various interest groups with a stake in the future of tropical forests, such as indigenous peoples, rural populations in developing countries, national governments, scientists, private enterprises. Interested like-minded groups could also constitute subcommittees, such as an "NGO Subcommittee" to facilitate consultation and outreach among these groups.

Mandate and Function:

- To establish or confirm the goals, objectives, guidelines and standards to be met in TFAP related activities.
- To meet annually, in order to review progress in preparing and implementing national TFAPs and all other activities aimed at achieving the goals of the TFAP.
- To periodically evaluate adherence to TFAP standards and guidelines, as a condition of further endorsement of national planning exercises and implementation of the TFAP.
- To monitor the results of the TFAP, in terms of its stated goals and objectives, and to amend or adjust the TFAP goals, objectives, guidelines and standards, as appropriate.
- To review and approve the annual work plan and budget of the TFAP secretariat, and to provide oversight for the work of the secretariat and the use of TFAP Trust Fund monies.
- To report periodically on the results of TFAP related activities, and to clarify what is and is not being done as part of the TFAP (i.e. to control the use of the TFAP "label").

International TFAP Secretariat

Premise: some type of coordinating unit is needed, with a full-time staff and adequate resources to function as a secretariat for the International Steering Committee, and to support TFAP related activities on a day to day basis; this secretariat must be considerably stronger than the present Coordinating Unit at FAO, and should be independent of the FAO.

Representation: to include a multi-disciplinary staff of administrators, natural resource management and development professionals.; to also include an affiliated but independent "clearinghouse" charged with the dissemination of TFAP documentation, upon request from interested parties.

Mandate and Function:

- To serve as the secretariat for the International Steering Committee, and to prepare appropriate reports, briefings and fulfill other tasks as directed by the Steering Committee.
- To respond to inquiries about the TFAP, and to liaise with national governments, aid agencies, NGOs and other institutions regarding the establishment of national steering committees, and the organization of TFAP related activities (issues papers, roundtables, seminars, missions, etc.).
- To provide technical support to national-level TFAP exercises as needed to insure compliance with TFAP guidelines and standards.
- To encourage and support international cooperation within the framework of the TFAP, via the work of the International Steering Committee and the TFAP/Forestry Advisors Group.
- To administer the TFAP Trust Fund, and to make use of such funds to support regional, national and local activities related to the realization of the goals and objectives of the TFAP.
- To support special studies, as needed, related to the implementation and assessment of the TFAP.
- To monitor and periodically evaluate the accomplishments and impacts of the various activities undertaken within the framework of the TFAP; and to report on these results.
- To disseminate information about the TFAP: basic principles, goals and objectives, guidelines and standards, results of TFAP exercises, periodic assessments of lessons learned, TFAP reports, etc., and to liaise with other organizations and institutions involved in activities which affect tropical forests, including the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the FAO Committee on Forestry, the Inter-governmental Committee on Forestry Development in the Tropics (CFDT), etc.
- To promote a better understanding among the general public of the complexities and consequences associated with tropical deforestation, and the necessary actions and anticipated benefits of the sustainable development of tropical forests.

TFAP - Forestry Advisors Group

Premise: Since its inception, the TFAP/FAG has proved to be a very useful means of promoting cooperation and information exchanges among development assistance agencies involved with the TFAP.

Representation: to include chief forestry advisors or others responsible for programming assistance in the forestry sector by the major aid agencies, as well as representatives of implementing agencies (government and NGO) involved with the TFAP.

Mandate and Function:

- To meet periodically on an informal basis to exchange information, coordinate and harmonize efforts in support of the TFAP;
- To identify and make use of opportunities to improve the availability and use of human and financial resources for the conservation and sustainable development of tropical forests,
- To assist in mobilizing appropriate support for the work of the International and National

Steering Committees and corresponding TFAP secretariats;

- To liaise with the TFAP secretariat and the International and National Steering Committees of the TFAP in the monitoring and evaluation of the TFAP.
- To make recommendations to the TFAP secretariat and the International Steering Committee of ways and means to improve the TFAP.

National TFAP Steering Committees

Premise: A TFAP cannot be successfully prepared and implemented at the national level without some mechanism for establishing ownership and control over the TFAP by a broadly representative group of persons; existing institutional structures (e.g. Forestry Dept.) generally lack the means to provide for the multi-sectoral approach, strategic analysis, broad participation and attention to policy reform and other changes in the political economy which are required in the TFAP.

Representation: to include representatives of the communities most directly affected by the TFAP (forest-dwellers), and the full array of institutions and organizations (public and private) which have a critical role to play in preparing and implementing the TFAP and in influencing the use of forest lands.

Mandate and Function:

- To foster agreement upon and generate support for full participation in the TFAP planning process.
- To assist in the gathering and analysis of relevant information for the TFAP planning process.

- To guide the development of issues papers, terms of reference, analyses, field studies, reports, and proposals related to the TFAP.
- To support the decentralization of the TFAP planning process via a variety of mechanisms which favor consultation and decision-making at the community level.
- To promote the development of a consensus on a comprehensive national strategy and integrated action plan for the achievement of the goals of the TFAP.
- To contribute towards increased political support for policy reforms and other political and administrative decisions necessary for the successful implementation of the TFAP.
- To assist in the preparation and enactment of legislative reforms, policy revisions, manpower development plans, research proposals, reallocation of available funding, investment plans (for national and external assistance), and other actions needed to implement the national TFAP.
- To monitor progress with the implementation of the TFAP, to assess its impact and to insure compliance with TFAP guidelines and standards, with a view to promoting any corrective action necessary.
- To report on the results of the national TFAP process.

National TFAP Secretariat

Premise: the effectiveness of the National Steering Committee will depend on the participation of individuals that in most cases cannot devote themselves full-time to the TFAP process; this Committee will need to be supported by a full-time Secretariat, with appropriate staff and resources.

Representation: to include a relatively small multi-disciplinary staff of administrators, natural

34

resource management and development professionals.

Mandate and Function:

- To serve as the secretariat for the National Steering Committee, and to prepare appropriate reports, briefings and fulfill other tasks as directed by the Steering Committee.
- To respond to inquiries about the TFAP, and to liaise with government and aid agencies, NGOs and other institutions regarding the organization of TFAP related activities (issues papers, roundtables, seminars, missions, etc.) and the dissemination of TFAP reports.
- To prepare periodic reports for the National Steering Committee and International Secretariat, regarding TFAP activities completed, underway or planned.
- To support special studies, as needed, related to the implementation and assessment of the TFAP.
- To assist in promoting a better understanding among the general public of the complexities and consequences associated with tropical deforestation, and the necessary actions and anticipated benefits of the sustainable development of tropical forests.

Appendix D:

Recommendations For Guidelines for NGO Participation in the Implementation of a National TFAP

| Preparatory Phase |
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| <p>1) TFAP planning processes should identify the most capable institutions (whether governmental or non-governmental institutions) that can complement and support government/aid agency activities, including, for example, organization of grassroots consultation, preparation of issues papers, data gathering and analysis, research, monitoring, and management of projects. These institutions also need to identify government and aid agency projects and policies that have demonstrated their social and ecological benefits so that they may be complemented. Projects and policies that have demonstrated significant negative social and ecological impacts should also be identified and discontinued.</p> <p>2) Donors and FAO should strongly encourage the formation of a national steering committee to oversee the development of the implementation of a national TFAP process. NGOs with the capacity to represent various interests, i.e. indigenous peoples, small farmers, women, landless rural people, biodiversity conservation, should be members of this steering</p> | <p>committee along with appropriate governmental agencies and private businesses.</p> <p>3) As noted in the general recommendations, a strategy for grassroots participation should be developed during the preparatory phase by national governments, donors and NGOs. A survey should be carried out in advance of the TFAP to identify NGOs active in forestry and land use issues and to assess their interest in and potential contributions to the TFAP process.</p> <p>4) A reporting requirement on grassroots and NGO participation should be included in the terms of reference for TFAP implementation. The national steering committee should report to FAO's TFAP Coordinating Unit on compliance with the guidelines recommended here. They should make this information available to all interested parties.</p> <p>5) Greater emphasis needs to be placed on public involvement in the preparation of the issues papers. Issue papers should be widely distributed, with sufficient time allowed for</p> |
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VOICES FROM THE MARGIN

issues papers. Issue papers should be widely distributed, with sufficient time allowed for public review and comment. Issue papers should highlight those items for which

information is not readily available, in order to ensure that these issues are later addressed by the TFAP process.

Execution Phase

6) NGOs should be encouraged to assist in problem analysis and strategy formulation as full partners in working groups and other fora and help challenge assumptions about the true causes of deforestation and the sustainability of land uses. NGOs have much information to contribute to the analysis of policies and issues. They can contribute in a number of ways: direct participation in working groups; local, regional and national workshops; building public awareness of the issues at stake; consultation with constituents to bring new information into the process, etc.

7) TFAP planning processes should assess the relative urgency of priority activities.

Relatively free of many of the bureaucratic limitations of larger institutions, NGOs can identify and act on issues requiring urgent attention and action.

8) NGOs should be provided with technical assistance in the preparation of project proposals in order to help facilitate their involvement in the implementation of a national TFAP.

9) More attention should be given to the absorptive capacity and other institutional constraints (such as staffing and training needs), not only of government agencies, but also of NGOs in light of the priority actions identified in national TFAPs.

Implementation and Follow-up Phase

10) National TFAP documents should be translated into local languages and widely disseminated to government agencies, NGOs, industry, and other interested groups.

11) An outreach program should be established to maintain communication with interested parties within and outside government, so that these groups can continue to contribute to TFAP implementation and monitoring, and improve the TFAP's capability to reach its objectives.

12) More emphasis must be given to monitoring the results of TFAP activities at the national

level and, of critical importance, to assessing the impacts of the TFAP process on reducing deforestation and promoting sustainable and equitable forest land and resource use. In monitoring NGO participation, the success of NGO involvement must ultimately be measured by whether or not the resulting policies and investments substantially reflect the views, demands, and priorities of the social and ecological interests that NGOs represent.

NOTE:

1. Based on WRI, April 1989

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